

Opening Statement of Chairman Fred Upton
Energy and Power Subcommittee Markup on H.R. 2681, the Cement Sector
Regulatory Relief Act & H.R. 2250, the EPA Regulatory Relief Act
September 13, 2011

Dating back to my days working in the Office of Management and Budget under President Reagan, I have been deeply concerned about the harm that can come from excessive federal regulations. And with each passing day that unemployment remains above 9 percent, we see the EPA's unprecedented regulatory burden is causing genuine hardships for the American people.

Because of the economic damage that comes from such ill-advised regulations, President Obama himself recently decided to withdraw EPA's proposal to revisit the ozone rule. That single proposal had the potential to be the most expensive environmental regulation in history, and I'm pleased to see it taken off the table. However, we must recognize that there are many other proposed and recently finalized regulations that also pose a threat to jobs and the economy in my state of Michigan and all across the country.

Today we will address two such sets of regulations – those impacting the cement industry and those affecting boilers used in manufacturing, commercial, and institutional settings. These regulations pose a clear and present danger to job creation, which is why the two bills under consideration today, the Cement Sector Regulatory Relief Act and the EPA Regulatory Relief Act, need to become law.

Let me give an example of how these regulations – as they are currently conceived – are directly undermining the shared goal of job creation. President Obama signed a massive stimulus bill at the beginning of his term, much of which was directed toward major infrastructure projects. And he continues to advocate for building roads and bridges to spur hiring. But it takes cement to make infrastructure, yet EPA's original cement MACT proposal imposed an unprecedented regulatory burden on the industry.

Even EPA admitted that the original cement rules would have caused plant shutdowns and raised the cost of cement. In other words, it would have been a boon to the Chinese cement industry, but a real drag here at home. Given the importance of cement in the economic recovery, this is clearly not the way we should be treating an industry and a product so vital to any turnaround.

These bills are about a common-sense, pro-jobs approach to regulations. They simply require EPA to promulgate cement plant and boiler regulations that reduce emissions using reasonable and achievable targets and timetables. It is no surprise these bills enjoy bipartisan support, and I look forward to their approval by this subcommittee today. I yield back.